

'Aerial reconnaissance revealed no reinforcements to the landing forces in the Dover area. Other ports on England's south coast were not observed by reconnaissance planes.' So ROMMEL VON RUNDSTEDT was able to reassure him that there was still no immediate danger of an Allied landing based on reliable aerial photographs.<sup>1</sup>

The question immediately arises, however, as to why reconnaissance flights were not carried out over the actual invasion ports on the Normandy coast, where the German Air Force had actually observed heavy activity by the Allied landing fleets since April 1944. Was this just an unfortunate coincidence, or was there more to it? In fact, von BARSEWISCH, the reconnaissance general responsible, still had a number of tricks that he could use to gain knowledge of the enemy's plans despite the strongest Allied air superiority. This also included the mysterious Sond.Aufkl.St.103 (Special Reconnaissance Squadron 103), which was based in Orly near Paris in the spring and early summer of 1944. To this day, almost nothing is known about the super-secret Recon Squadron, when it was formed, how strong it was, and how long it existed. The Sond.Aufkl.St.103 had captured aircraft such as a former American Republic P 47 D Thunderbolt and probably a number of other Allied aircraft.

In the early summer of 1944, captured Thunderbolts were used by the Luftwaffe to successfully carry out at least two reconnaissance missions over England in order to photograph Allied preparations for an invasion.<sup>2</sup> For their daring missions over the English coast, the squadron's planes retained their original Allied livery, but wore them German national emblem. According to other information, the planned reconnaissance flights of two captured Allied fighter planes over English south coast ports shortly before D-Day were banned by unknown high authorities in the OKW.<sup>3</sup>

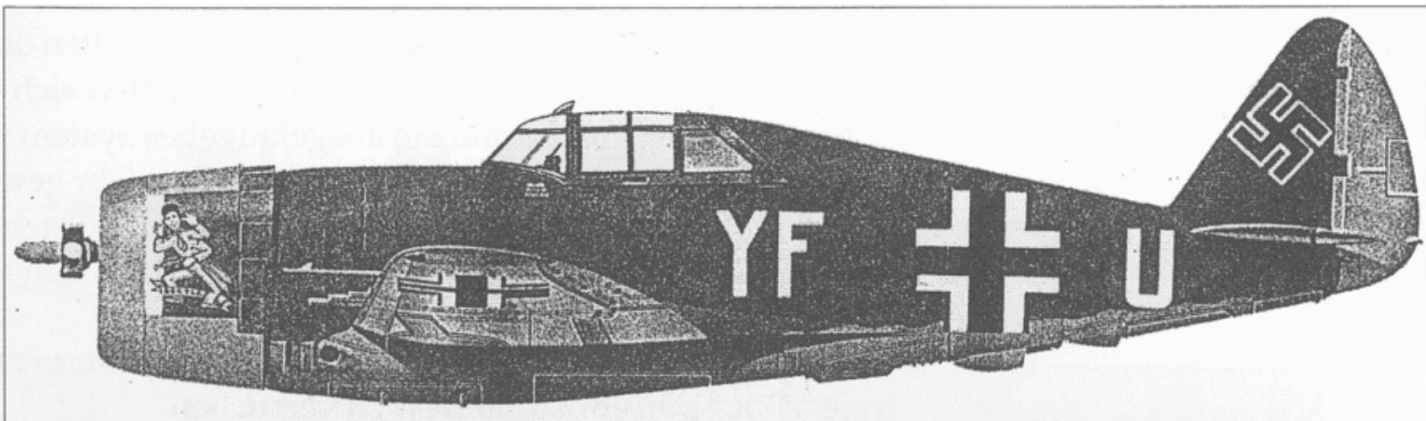
1 Michael REYNOLDS,  
*An opponent like steel,*  
Pour le Merite, Selent  
2004, p. 47 f.

2 Hans-Heiri STAPFER,  
*Strangers in a Strange*  
*Land*, Squadron/Signal  
1988, pp. 44 and 56 f.

3 David WADMAN,  
"Luftwaffe Reconnaissance  
of UK 1943-44", in:  
*LEMB*, January 18,  
2004, Internet pages.

Republic P47 D  
'Thunderbolt' in service  
with Special  
Reconnaissance  
Squadron 103, Orly,  
early summer 1944.

Installation of a German  
Rb type reconnaissance  
camera from an FW 190 A 4



Of course, no systematic reconnaissance of the British Isles was possible with such measures. At the decisive moment, however, camouflaged captured aircraft such as the P 47D and the Lockheed P 38 G ›Lightning‹, of which there were at least two examples for reconnaissance missions in the Luftwaffe, could be used for successful special flights over important targets.

But what use were these finesse and tricks if these camouflaged reconnaissance aircraft were sent via the wrong ports? So it came about that correct reconnaissance results worked to the German disadvantage. We shall later encounter the question of whether this happened by accident.

### **Was a mine on the invasion coast prevented at the last minute?**

According to reliable information, German mine-laying operations were planned for the night of June 6, 1944, which would also have included the previously mine-free invasion coast.<sup>1</sup> The consequences for the landing that developed shortly thereafter would have been difficult to predict. However, due to bad weather,<sup>2</sup> these operations were called off, as were the usual naval reconnaissance patrols.

<sup>1</sup> Hrowe H. SAUNDERS, *The Victory Betrayed*, Druffel, Leoni 1984, pp. 43 and 199.

<sup>2</sup> Karl DÖNITZ, *10 years and 20 days*, Munich 1958, p. 344. (New edition: Bublies, Schnellbach 1999.)

The fact is that Grand Admiral DÖNITZ criticized the omission of these missions in his book *10 Years and 20 Days*<sup>2</sup>, but without naming those responsible for the cancellation. The assessment of the weather situation given as a reason for the fateful cancellation is not convincing, since no later than the evening of June 5, 1944, information from the German weather service predicting the possibility of landing was available to all staffs of the German defense front and thus also to the responsible naval officer.

These omitted mine throwings were about the so-called 'lightning barriers'. Instead of relying on the maintenance and strengthening of the old German minefields in the middle of the canal, which had existed for a long time and had since been cleared, those responsible in the Navy had relied on an ingenious system of "lightning barriers" that were only thrown when there was a threat of invasion should be. With the small number of throwing formations available and in view of the Allied air superiority, this was a very risky concept.

Apparently the Germans almost got out in order to at least try to lay these ›lightning barriers‹.

In fact, these mines could be found in the Seine Bay, where the Alli then landed, could no longer be thrown in time.

On the evening of June 5th, the operational and fully laden mine ships, such as the artillery carriers of the 6th artillery carrier flotilla, were not allowed to set out to lay mines, despite suitable high water.

On the morning of June 6, when the invasion was underway, they could no longer leave their tidal ports because of the low water and, condemned to immobility, were quickly eliminated by the Allied bomber formations.

This too, according to Hrowe H. SAUNDERS, was one of those Actions that, seen in the right light, were very disreputable.

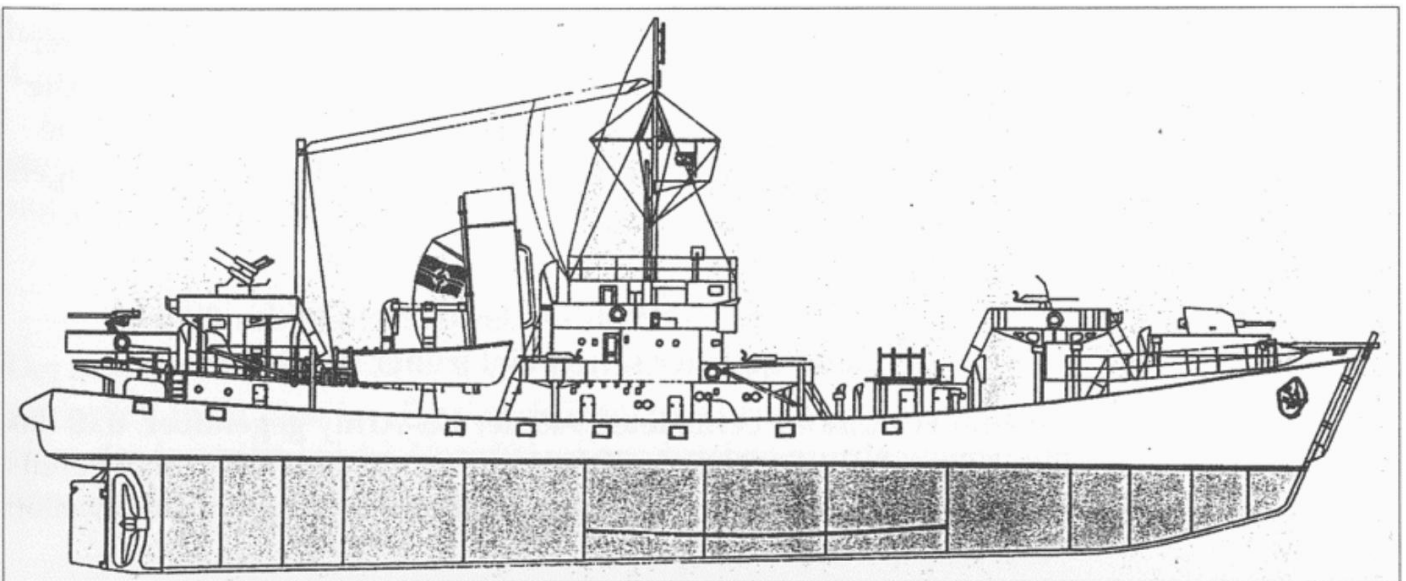
As it turned out during the course of the landing, the few old German coastal mines from earlier launches remained a real danger to the landing forces. The Americans suffered the heaviest material losses of the day they landed in the area off the Utah beach, where a destroyer, 2 LCI ('Landing Craft Infantry') and 3 LCT sank due to previously undetected mines.

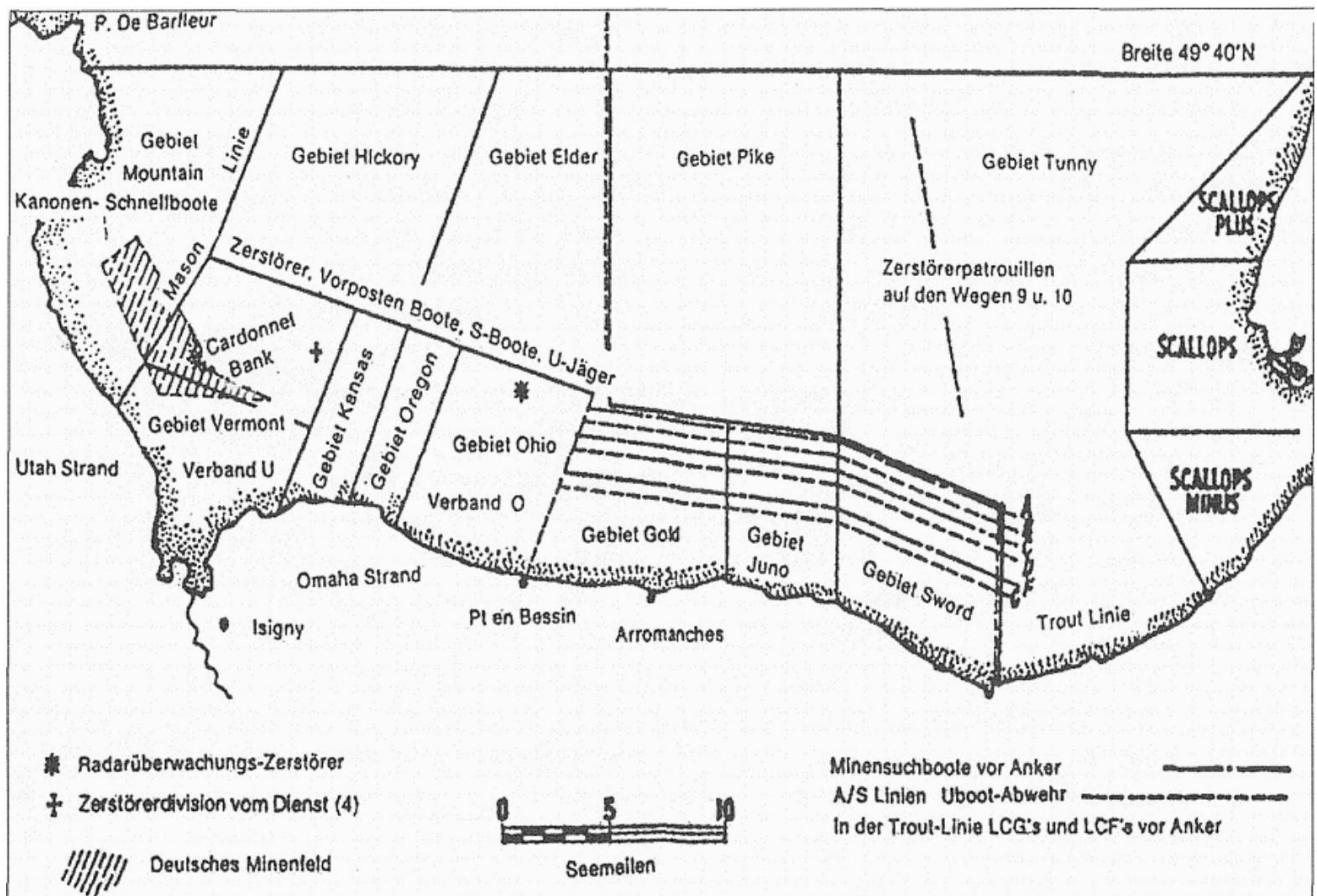
Later, on the following invasion nights, 'Blitz lock' were actually thrown - but in the wrong place! Navy clearance boats laid 2000 ground mines and 200 KMA ('Coastal Mine Anchor') in the area west of Le Havre to Boulogne. They were all useless as no invasion ever took place in the Pas-de-Calais. In the invasion space, on the other hand, not a single "Blitzsperre" was thrown. Here, too, those responsible for these senseless mine operations, which cost many victims, have never been named.

The real 'mine war' thus began in the waters of the Normandy only when the most favorable time had long since passed.

Auxiliary warships of the Navy like this outpost trawler were supposed to lay a 'lightning barrier' of sea mines in the Bay of the Seine the night before the invasion,

but had to re





### Land areas and the foreshore areas.

On June 6 there was only one old German mine barricade in the 'Utah' landing area. The rest was mine free. From: Franz KUROWSKI, *Duel of the Giants*.

*Tank battle in Normandy*, Podzun Pallas, Wölfersheim Berstadt 2000.

## Section 2: The Truth About the 'Surprise'

On the afternoon of June 5, 1944, 6,463 vessels set sail to cross the 150-kilometer stretch of sea between the southern English coast and the Seine Bay. More than 6,000 ships sailed unhindered against the French coast in a journey lasting many hours under a moonlit sky in order to give Germany the coup de grâce at the right time. Where was the German reconnaissance that had already received early warnings from radio reports? It failed, it failed so utterly that the marching-in of the huge armada was only seen a few kilometers off the coast.

### The big riddle: Did the OKW and the Führer Headquarters know much earlier?

General WARLIMONT reported to the US Army in 1946 that by the afternoon of June 5, the Führer Headquarters and the High Command of the Wehrmacht had information that the invasion would begin on the morning of June 6, 1944. He said: 'HITLER knew

it, JODL knew, but the information was not passed on to the troops in Normandy. «1 The question arises: why not and - perhaps more importantly - by whom?

1 David C. ISBY, *The German Army at D-Day* (Greenhill 2004), p. 91.

### **The first days of June: the invasion is announced**

By June 1st there were increasing signs that the invasion was imminent.

The gunner Hein SEVERLOH, who later became famous, was able to see the top secret papers of his boss, Lieutenant FREHSING, from the artillery observation point base WN62 that day. It said: "The ships in the English ports are being loaded." A day later the soldiers of the position were prepared for the impending attack in a speech by the section commander, and shortly thereafter all superfluous food supplies were eaten

2 Hein SEVERLOH, *WN62*, HEK Creativ Verlag, Garbsen 42006, p. 19 f.

On June 1 and 2, Gestapo agents who had infiltrated the Resistance reported that they had received 28 coded messages ordering the underground to prepare for imminent action at the start of the invasion.

It was known that this activation would occur approximately 48 hours before landing. Now she was there.

Colonel VON DER HEYDTE of the 6th Parachute Regiment was even told with a smile by a cousin of the Free French General LECLERC that the invasion was planned for the night of June 4th. That same night, all the French-speaking soldiers of the 6th Parachute Regiment who came from Alsace-Lorraine deserted.<sup>3</sup> The cousin had told the truth. In fact, the Allies first wanted to land in June, and their fleet had already sailed.

3 David C. ISBY, *The German Army at D-Day*, Greenhill 2004, pp. 65 f., 165 and 225

However, as I said, General EISENHOWER had to cancel the planned landing in France for weather reasons.

### **A scapegoat for decades: meteorology**

Well-known military author Janusz PIEKALKIEWICZ wrote in his masterful book *Invasion. France 1944* that no other problem of the invasion has been the subject of so much inaccurate writing as the weather on the eve of the landing

<sup>4</sup> Janusz PIEKALKIEWICZ, *Invasion. France 1944*, Southwest, Munich 1979, pp. 121-126.

In fact, for decades there was a strange consensus among historians, senior military officials and all authors who were significantly involved in the writing of history from both former belligerent parties about the alleged inability of German meteorologists to correctly forecast the weather on the night of July 6, 1944. Crowning this agreement between Germans and former Allies was a report in 1970 that in the last hours before the invasion an important ultra-message had reached EISENHOWER's headquarters, containing a decoding of a German Luftwaffe weather forecast ahead of the approaching invasion night has been. In a code that was particularly difficult for the deciphering machine to crack, the Luftwaffe predicted a prolonged period of inclement weather for the Channel during the current lunar and tidal phase. So they had not registered the brief improvement in the weather forecast by STAGG (RAF Group Captain JM STAGG, SHAEF's chief meteorologist). Apologetically and to save the honor of the German meteorologists, it is often stated that they lacked the information from long-range weather observation and were therefore unable to give a short-term weather forecast.

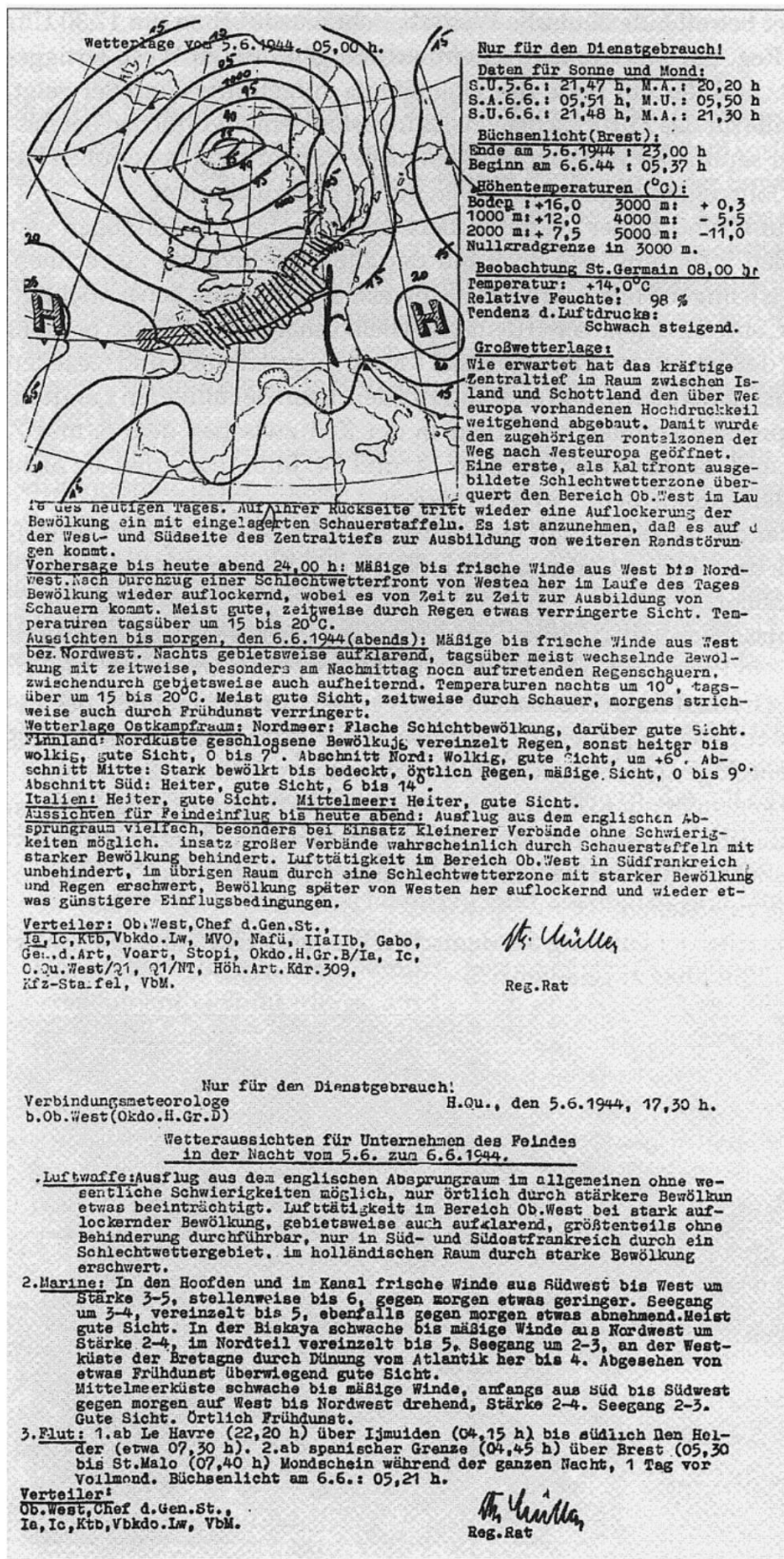


JM STAGG, Chief  
Meteorologist at  
Headquarters Allied  
Expeditionary Forces (SHAEF)

It is often forgotten that the Germans, in addition to an almost uninterrupted chain of manned and unmanned weather stations from the North Cape to Labrador (Canada), also had weather submarines in the Atlantic. From the air, He 177 long-distance weather aircraft of the "Westa 2" collected precise data from the "weather kitchen" for the imminent invasion from Bordeaux in dangerous 24-hour missions, while Ju 52s and He 111s of the German Weather Service camouflaged by Spain went on secret missions started that went far beyond the neutrality of the country.

Technically, the Germans would have been able to make accurate weather forecasts about the expected meteorological conditions, and of course both warring parties knew of the importance of the weather conditions for the planned landing. Nevertheless, it remained the case, German meteorology had failed.

Janusz PIEKALKIEWICZ was able to prove that all the post-war information is wrong. The German meteorologists hardly had as many options as their Allied opponents, but it is all the more astonishing that they, like their professional colleagues from the other side of the Channel, had accurately predicted the change in weather for the night of June 5th to 6th.



German meteorologists at work.

The weather report from the chief meteorologist at OB West on June 5, 1944 proves that the Germans knew in good time about the weather conditions favorable for a landing (from: Janusz PIEKALKIEWICZ, *France 1944*, Southwest, Munich 1979).



1 Samuel W. MITCHAM  
 Jr., *The Disaster Fox in  
 Normandy* (Cooper  
 Square 2001), p. 63.

Germany's secret weather  
 spies over the Atlantic:  
 Heinkel He 177 A-5 long-  
 distance weather  
 reconnaissance aircraft of  
 the Westa 2/ Ob.dL in  
 Bordeaux. Converted to the  
 He 177 from April 1944, it  
 was used shortly before the  
 invasion to predict the  
 "landing weather". The He  
 177 could remain airborne  
 for up to 24 hours in throttled  
 flight. The Allies noticed the  
 estate

The secret weather  
 sniffers did not become  
 aware until they received  
 Ultra information about  
 their transfer back to  
 Germany in August 1944.

The German weather report in question was already at 5:30 p.m.  
 by Reg. Rat MÜLLER, the chief meteorologist of OB West, and the distributor  
 listed at the end of the document shows that all commanders of all branches  
 of arms responsible for repelling the invasion received this advance warning.  
 Decades of lies were now collapsing.

Due to this weather forecast German meteorologists was for the 5./6. June  
 1944 to reckon with the Allied invasion.

All important positions were demonstrably notified in good time.  
 But, although the senior German commanders in the west were aware, only  
 twice in July 1944 did the moon, daybreak and tide coincide to meet the  
 requirements of the Allied landings, and that was between June 5th and 7th  
 and thereafter between June 12 and 14, they did not respond to the crucial  
 weather report.

Was the Luftwaffe's 'very well coded' Ultra message with the wrong forecast  
 a post-war forgery or the work of saboteurs?

In fact, Colonel Prof. STOEBE, the chief meteorologist of the Luftwaffe in  
 Paris, and his deputy Major LETTAU had around April 4th.  
 June released a large part of her office to enjoy the joys of life in Paris.<sup>1</sup> The  
 same Major LETTAU, who after all as a meteorologist was later responsible  
 for the VI operation, reported to the US Army in 1949 that the German weather  
 forecasts had been so bad that the commanders had to look at the sky  
 themselves every morning to make their own judgment about the weather.

Also in the leadership of the German weather service › merk  
 worthy‹ operations expired.





**"... expected to start the invasion within  
48 hours from June 6, 00:00 a.m."**

Just five minutes after Fifteenth Army Intelligence intercepted the second half of the invasion-announcing verse from Paul Verlaine's famous poem, receipt of the verse was announced at 9:20 p.m. on June 5, 1944 to the Ic of Army High Command passed. After that, the start of the invasion was to be expected from 00:00 on 6 June within 48 hours. The documents of the Intelligence Unit of the 15th Army in Tourcoing also prove that the report was checked by querying the Military Commander in Belgium/Northern France in Brussels with Major VON WANGENHEIM.

The German troops had set up 23 defense systems in northern France, the signals from which led to two monitoring centers. The first was built at Cap de la Hague near Cherbourg and belonged to the 7th German Army under General DOLLMANN. ES was destroyed on 31 May 1944 by 100 RAF Lancaster bombers. The second was in Tourcoing at the headquarters of the 15.

Army of General Hans VON SALMUTH.

The listening center at Tourcoing employed 30 radio specialists, the majority of whom were non-commissioned officers, who sat at the receivers day and night. Each man spoke three languages fluently.<sup>1</sup>

They were equipped with Telefunken receivers that worked with direct current between 30 and 300 MHz. Using meter waves, they were able to eavesdrop on the London police themselves, and they were able to eavesdrop on radio conversations in England that were taking place thousands of miles away.

Unmolested by Allied bombs, Lieutenant Colonel Helmut MEYER's specialists succeeded on June 1, 2, 3 and 5, 1944 in intercepting the crucial messages that announced the start of the invasion.

The meaning of this saying had been known to the German counterintelligence since autumn 1943. When the Atlantic front was alerted, the long-established mechanism of German defensive measures was bound to kick in automatically and give the Allies a warm welcome. The artillerymen in the bunkers of the Atlantic Wall would stand behind their loaded guns, armored divisions would wait as reinforcements for the moment of the counterattack, German Schnellboots would emerge from their bunkers, and the Luftwaffe

<sup>1</sup> Myrone N. CUICH,  
*Armes secrètes et ouvra  
ges mystérieux de Dun  
kerque à Cherbourg*,  
Jean Bernard, Paris 1996,  
p. 131 ff.

fe would send their night operations out of accustomed naval combat squadrons.

Was the Allied invasion in danger of failing before it even began because of its untimely discovery?

### **June 5, 10:30 p.m.: Cherbourg listening service discovers the invasion**

A network of listening devices was in place along the French coast to monitor the Channel and the English island.

In 1944, the “bat ears” of the German sound measuring stations were able to pick up noises up to 300 kilometers away, while underwater microphones acoustically recorded the movements of Allied ships in the canal.

Indeed, at 10:30 p.m. on June 5, a lieutenant in the Cherbourg listening service reported to his regimental commander that Allied ship movements and concentrations of transport aircraft indicated the strong possibility of an invasion that same night.

Immediately afterwards the listening service of the 6th FJ. The regiment said the same thing, and from 11:00 p.m. Colonel VON DER HEYDTE , regiment commander, followed the advance of the Allied air and sea fleets on his large map, spellbound on the enemy situation map.

However, the 7th Army did not react yet, although they had the same information as from the HEYDTES regiment at Carentan.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> David C. ISBY (ed.), *The German Army at D-Day*, Greenhill 2004, pp. 225 f.

### **Was the German radar really blind?**

The entire western European sphere of influence of the Third Reich was surrounded by a dense radar network against surprises from the air and from the sea. It is often said today that the German radar eyes were completely blind during the invasion and were therefore unable to give any advance warning.

This is demonstrably wrong. In reality, Germany's radar network was supposed to give its own leadership two more chances to react in time before the start of the Allied invasion.

The Allies, knowing that the German radar positions could detect any attempted landing in advance, made a concerted effort to completely disable the German early warning network in France.

By the evening of June 5, 1944, when the Allied invasion fleet left their English home ports, of the original 92

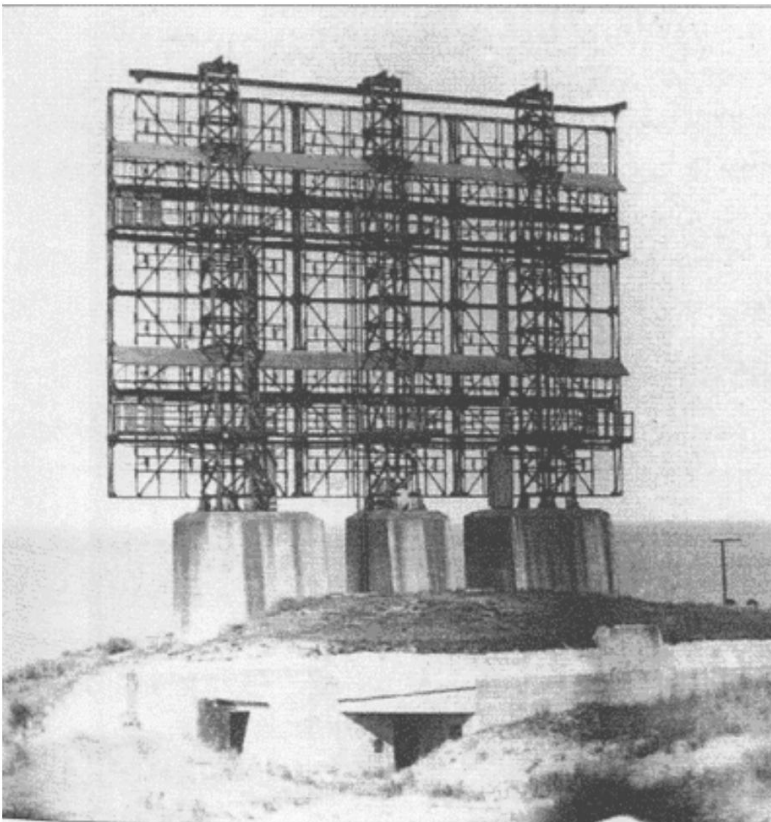
German radar positions along the north coast of France and Belgium, all but 16 have been heavily attacked from the air. At this point in time, long-distance early warning radars of the "Wassermann" and "Mammut" types, which were particularly sensitive to air attacks due to their conspicuous structures, were particularly affected

Massive jammers and complicated radar decoy measures also ensured that a large part of the still functioning German radar positions were blinded during the hours of the invasion.

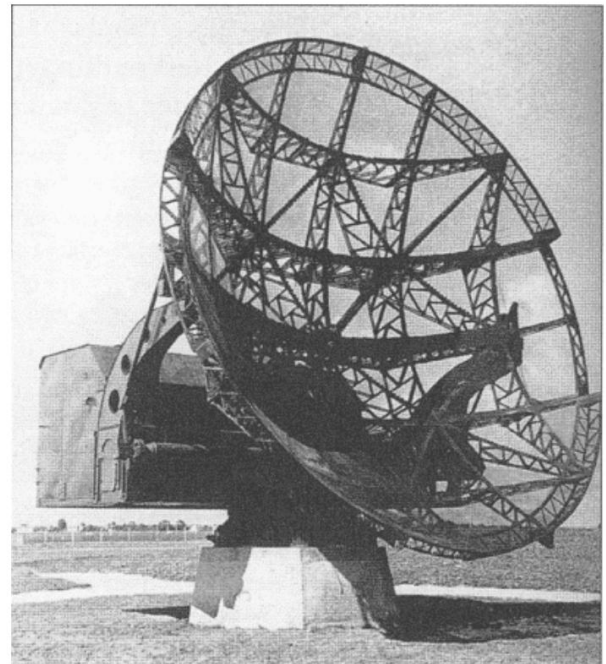
Many, but not all! And so Germany's radar devices ensured that the military command in France had two more chances to raise the alarm in good time: The first of these reports came from the occupied Channel Island of Guernsey the best locating devices available at the time, of the types ›Freya‹ and ›Würzburg‹. At around 10:40 p.m., ih

1 Alfred PRICE, *The history of US Electronic Warfare*, Vol. 1, Murray 1984, pp. 125-128.

2 Otto Ernst REMER, *Conspiracy and Treason about Hitler*, Remer Heipke, Bad Kissingen 51993, p. 122



The "Mammut" Fu.MO (Funk Mess Ortung) 52 radar, which had a detection range of up to 300 km and weighed 150 t, was particularly sensitive to air raids.



The ›Würzburg See Riese‹ radar, which was particularly conspicuous for its parabolic antenna with a diameter of 7.4 m and completed 25 rotations per minute, turned out to be an excellent, precise radio measuring device. Around 1,500 examples were built. All heavy anti-aircraft batteries and some coastal batteries were equipped with this device.

four-engined "Lancaster" bombers lined up on the screens in regular formations and evenly spaced. Another missile could be observed at the same distance behind each aircraft, which could soon be identified as a cargo glider. A total of 180 teams were counted by this one air communications company.

The responsible colonel skipped through all the responsible posts on his long official route and immediately asked to be put through to the superior general command of his corps in St. Lô (Norman coast). He implored the person opposite to trigger the air raid alarm immediately, because he had the impression that a major landing operation would be taking place on the mainland in the next few minutes. About 20 minutes later (none of the responsible gentlemen let themselves be spoken to beforehand) the general command reported back. The answer was: the gentlemen of the staff from the mainland wished the comrades on the island good night and advised them not to see ghosts and not to let the horses run wild... Another 20 minutes later the first general staff officer of the corps (Ia) reported. personally on the island of Guernsey – all of a sudden he was available: "You were right. Large airborne landings behind the whole front. Alarm!" Thus, the defense against the Anglo-American invasion was delayed by at least 30 decisive minutes.

British "Horsa" type  
cargo glider.  
Numerous gliders  
broke down on  
landing because of  
the bumpy terrain.

From: Giorgio  
APOSTOLO, *The Great Air  
Battles of the 20th Century.*  
*Century*, Bechter  
münz, Augsburg 1997.



Tag Uhrzeit Ort und Art der Unterkunft	Darstellung der Ereignisse (Dabei wichtig: Beurteilung der Lage (Feind- und eigene), Eingangs- und Abgangs- zeiten von Meldungen und Befehlen)
3..6.44	Am 1., 2. und 3.6.44 ist durch die Mast innerhalb der "Messages personnels" der französischen Sendungen des britischen Rundfunks folgende Meldung abgehört worden: "Les sanglots longs des violons de l'automne". Nach vorhandenen Unterlagen soll dieser Spruch am 1. oder 15. eines Monats durchgegeben werden, nur die erste Hälfte eines ganzen Spruches darstellen und ankündigen, dass binnen 48 Stunden nach Durchgabe der zweiten Hälfte des Spruches, gerechnet von 00.00 Uhr des auf die Durchgabe folgenden Tages ab, die anglo-amerikanische Invasion be- ginnt.
21.15 Uhr	Zweite Hälfte des Spruches "Blessent mon cœur d'une longueur monotone" wird durch Mast abgehört.
21.20 Uhr	Spruch an Ic-AO durchgegeben. Danach mit Invasionsbeginn ab 6.6. 00.00 Uhr innerhalb 48 Stunden zu rechnen. Überprüfung der Meldung durch Rückfrage beim Militärbe- fehlshaber Belgien/Nordfrankreich in Brüssel (Major von Wangenheim).

June 5, 1944: Document from the listening center in Tourcoing stating the start of the invasion – however, no one reacted to the reports that were passed on (according to: CU

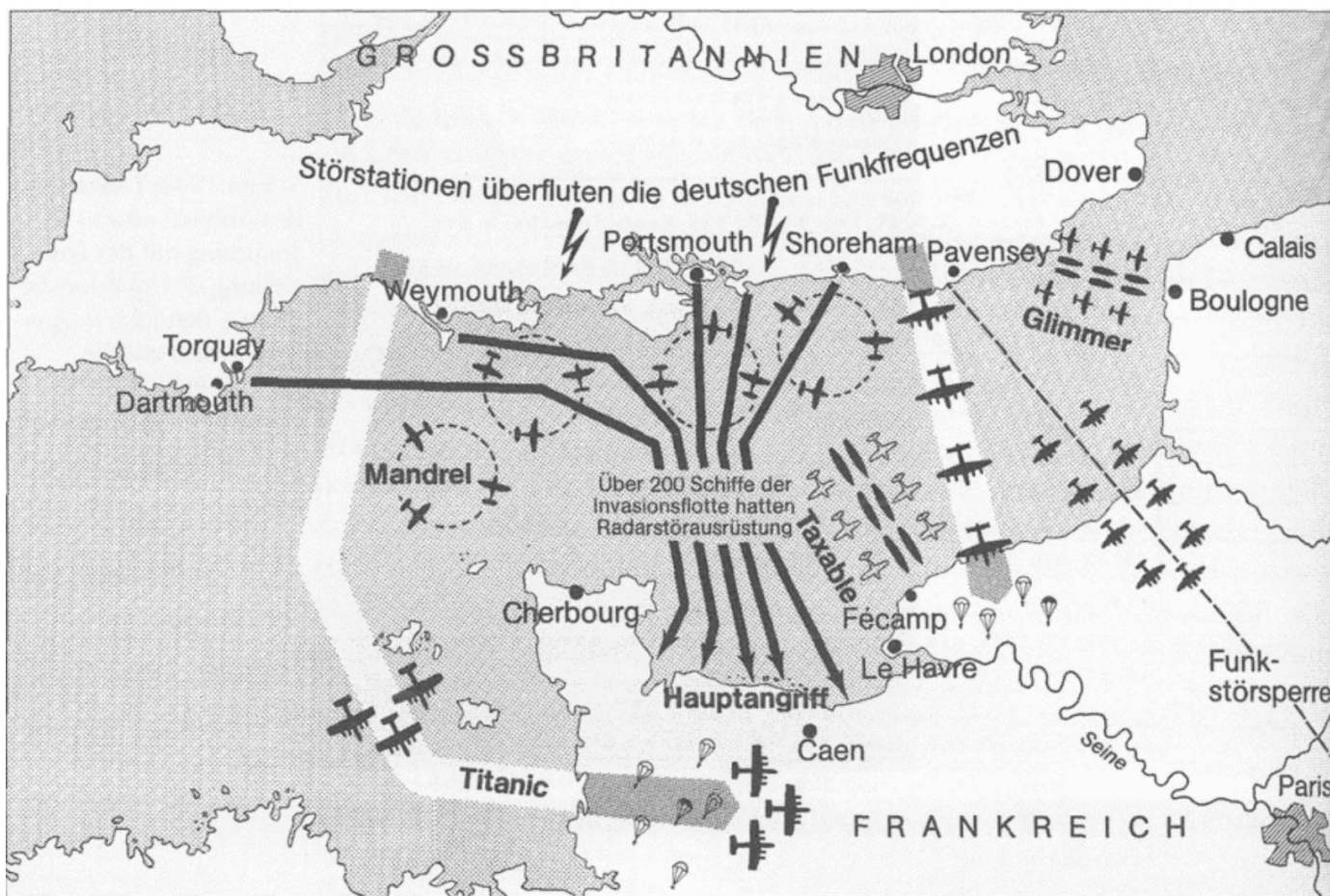
Now the hour of the night hunters should have come. In contrast to the rest of the Luftwaffe, German night fighters were at the height of their success at the time.

A successful infiltration of the night fighters stationed in the west into the cumbersome Arma da of more than 1,000 transport planes and cargo glider teams fully laden with paratroopers and their supplies, which was located by the radar devices, would have meant the end of the airborne landing in a bloodbath.

Instead, the night fighter command in charge ordered all night fighters to assemble pointlessly in eastern French airspace, far from the landing area. Today it is said that the experienced commanding officers, who in the spring of 1944 were able to smuggle their night fighters into almost every stream of bombers despite Allied deception maneuvers, allegedly allowed themselves to be deceived by the Allies' "tin foil" clouds.

Not a single German night fighter was to disturb the Allies.

In the first wave, the Lancaster bombers were able to drop their paratroopers to secure the landing sites without any resistance



The Allied radio and radar deception operations in the night from 5 to 6

June 1944. From: Janusz PIEKALKIEWICZ, *The Invasion. France 1944*, Southwest, Munich 1979.

1 HA KOCH, *Flak*, Podzun-Pallas, Wölfersheim-Berstadt 21965, p. 138.

2 Ibid. (Caen Ratter), p. 132.

and their gliders land almost completely undisturbed behind the front line. They lost about two percent of their aircraft and gliders to anti-aircraft fire.

When the anti-aircraft guns had recovered from their surprise, their defenses in the landing area remained so great for a while that the Allied paratroopers got into a serious crisis.<sup>1</sup> The reinforcements and, above all, <sup>2</sup> the supply transports suffered losses from the concentrated fire of the anti-aircraft units to an extent not expected after the previous aerial bombardment, Major General James M. GARVIN, then commander of the American 82nd Parachute Division, reported in the *Infantry Journal* in 1948. What would have happened here if the units had been dropped into a fully defensive force would be?

In the chaos unleashed by the Allied airborne forces, the anti-aircraft gun squadrons were also lost. They had been calculated in the drop area of the American paratroopers in the area of Ste. Mère Eglise laid. The anti-aircraft officer responsible had left his entire fleet of traction equipment behind and

took off without a shot. Unfortunately, to this day it is not known who it was.<sup>1</sup> At 1:45 sharp on July 6, 1944, still several hours before the ship landings began, the last major warning came: the landing fleet had been located. Although almost all operational German wheel installations on the mainland were constantly being blinded by foil drops, the large FuMG position in Caen took in the landing units on the night of June 6, 1944. Barely 5 minutes later, at 1:50 a.m., this was reported to Paris. At first people thought it was a disturbance because of the multitude of spikes. There weren't that many ships! But then there was no longer any doubt: a conspicuous fleet must be approaching. Admiral HOFFMANN, Chief of Staff, reported immediately: "It can only be the invasion fleet." He reported to OB West and the Fuhrer's headquarters: "The invasion is here." Both the German High Command in Paris and in Rastenburg were skeptical. OB West's chief of staff sent back a mixture of mockery and irony: "Have they spotted seagulls?" The Navy was so certain that it was now alerting its shore stations and the naval forces in port. The high command at OB West did nothing again!

<sup>1</sup> Paul CARELL, *they are coming! The invasion of 1944*, Ullstein, Berlin 171994, p. 50 f.

FuMG = radio measuring device

After landing, some of the Allied soldiers were stunned by what they had found on the other side. Thus, in June 1944, *The Soldiers* newspaper ran a report, "Have you been surprised?" In it, Sergeant P. RAMING of the 6th

1st Airborne Division: "We found the enemy to have a curious mixture of preparedness and unpreparedness. In one dugout we discovered the remains of a half-eaten meal, showing that the Germans had been taken completely by surprise and had to flee headlong; in the other, just a few yards away, the Royal Engineers found a number of well-camouflaged, dwarf tanks controlled by cables and stuffed with explosives, ready to start, which again suggests the highest level of readiness."<sup>2</sup>

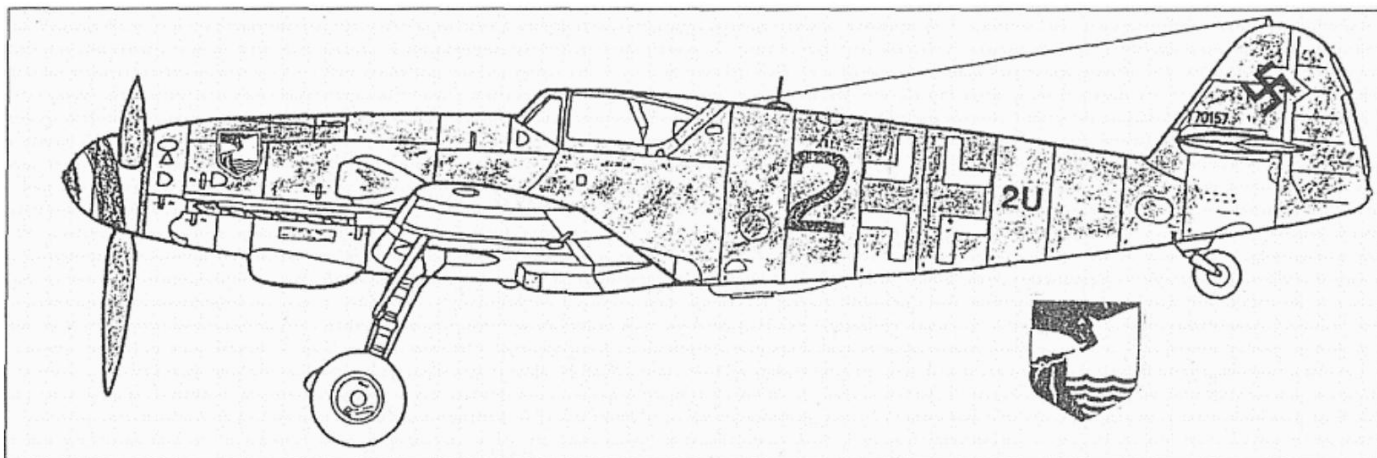
<sup>2</sup> Janusz Piekalkiewicz, *The Invasion. France 1944*,

Southwest, Munich 1979, p. 129.

### **June 6: They are coming! A German aerial reconnaissance finds the invasion fleet - and nothing happens**

From today's historiography, the 'chaos' and the Order confusion on the German side at the beginning of the invasion





Messerschmitt BF 109 G-8  
close reconnaissance  
aircraft of the 3./NA Cr 13  
(close reconnaissance group)  
(Canal Front 1944).

<sup>1</sup> Janusz PIEKALKIEWICZ,  
*Invasion. France 1944*,  
Southwest, Munich 1979, p.  
115.

<sup>2</sup> John WEAL, *Focke-Wulf  
FW 190 Aces of the Western  
Front*, Osprey Air-craft of  
the Aces No.9, Osprey  
reprint 1998, p. 72 ff.

related to the fact that the German Luftwaffe failed to detect the invasion fleet.

It is stated that on Wednesday, May 24, 1944, the last time a German aircraft was able to take aerial photos of the ports of Bournemouth, Pool, Portland, Weymouth, Folkstone and Dover.<sup>1</sup>

In fact, Lieutenant Adalbert BÄRWOLF of the 3./NAGr (close reconnaissance group) 13 succeeded at first light on the 6th. June 1944 to discover the invasion fleet off the beaches of Normandy with a Messerschmitt BF 109 G8 reconnaissance plane.<sup>2</sup> However, the coast defenses were only alerted after sighting the fleet from land.

BÄRWOLF's aerial photographs of the huge invasion fleet, which might have ended any doubts as to whether it was the main landing, were ignored by the higher headquarters of Army Group B and OB West. On the contrary: the photos of the Allied landing fleet from June 6, 1944 seem to have disappeared to this day.

### **In spite of everything: ›Alarm Coast‹ does not take place**

Not a single German soldier on the Atlantic Wall should have been surprised by the start of the Normandy invasion on June 6, 1944, but they were.

Although the headquarters of Army Group B and the OKW in East Prussian Rastenburg had reliable information about the imminent start of the invasion at around 10:15 p.m. on June 5, 1944, nothing happened. 'Alert coast', the keyword for alerting the Atlantic front, was not issued.

Only the Kriegsmarine did not adhere to this "carelessness" and at 1:50 a.m. on June 6th, on its own initiative, put its forces on high alert.

Colonel- General VON SALMUTH, the Commander-in-Chief of the 15th Army at the Pas-de-Calais, which was not affected by the landing, was just as little fooled as General MARCKS of the 84th Corps in St. L . Both prepared their subordinate units for combat.

General Walter WARLIMONT from the OKW command staff in Rastenburg independently put the Panzer Lehr Division on alert, while SS Brigadef hrer Fritz WITT had his 12th SS Panzer Division "Hitlerjugend" ready to march at 4:00 a.m. without an order to deploy. Both armored units would have been able, even without an official alarm, to advance in time to the threatened beaches of the Normandy with their tracked vehicles.

With the exception of the 352nd Infantry Division, the majority of the coastal defenses were almost asleep by the Allied landing without being alerted by the staff of Army Group B.

At the 352nd Infantry Division in the future sector "Omaha" the highest alert level "Imminent Danger" was announced by telephone shortly before midnight.<sup>1</sup> As in the previous days, the clocks here seem to have struck a different rhythm than in the Army Group.

Coincidentally (?) General DOLLMANN's headquarters had canceled a "test alert" planned for that night by the 7th Army in Normandy.<sup>2</sup> Otherwise the Allies would have encountered an "Atlantic Wall" that was fully ready to defend itself.

### **"Several hundred ships in the Seine Bay!"**

When the morning fog cleared over the English Channel at around 5:00 a.m. on June 6, 1944, camouflage of the Allied fleet was no longer possible. Thousands of ships were already in front of their starting positions, waiting for the right moment to disembark the landing troops. So it was the Marine Coastal Battery Marcouf whose commander, Lieutenant Walter OHMSEN, sounded the alarm. The well-known sentences were uttered when he telephoned the sea commander in Cherbourg, Admiral HENNECKE, and reported: "Several hundred ships in the Seine Bay. Question: Own vessels at sea?" After a very short interruption came the answer from Cherbourg: 'No, no own vessels at sea. If vehicles



SS Brigadef hrer  
Fritz WITT.

<sup>1</sup> Hein SEVERLOH, *WN62*,  
HEK Creativ Verlag,  
Garbsen 42006,  
p. 18.

<sup>2</sup> Samuel W. MITCHAM Jr.,  
*The Desert Fox in Normandy*  
(Cooper Square  
2001), p. 66.

1 Paul CARRELL, *they are coming! The invasion of 1944*, Ullstein, Berlin 1997, p. 159.

2 Kurt GRASER and Jürgen STAHLMANN, *Westwall, Maginot Line, Atlantic Wall*, Pawlak, Herrsching 1983, p. 158.

3 Hans VON LUCK, *Rommel an der Front*, Mittler, Hamburg 2006, p. 195.

4 Paul CARRELL, *they are coming! Invasion 1944*, Ullstein, Berlin 1997, p. 130 f.

5 Heinz SCHMOLKE, *The War Decision. Treason in Normandy*, Historia, Horb 2004, p. 47 ff.

identified, then opponents, shooting permission ›saving ammunition‹ end. Connection is made.«<sup>1</sup>

To this day, OHMSEN's report to Cherbourg is considered to be the official start of German alerting on the Atlantic coast. When a newspaper on June 15, 1944 announced that the chief of battery Marcouf had been awarded the Knight's Cross, it was also mentioned that Lieutenant OHMSEN was the first to report the start of the invasion.<sup>2</sup> The Allies had their first victory, the Surprise of the German defenses, scored.

### Dept. 3: The Atlantic Wall does not hold

How the English Airborne landings between Orne and Dives were saved

On June 5, the radio communication company of the 21st Panzer Division had picked up English plain text radio messages which indicated that the gliders had been loaded, and passed the message on to the top.<sup>3</sup> There was no reaction.

Shortly after midnight on June 6, the important bridge at Benouville was taken by the British 5th Airborne Brigade, which was later able to take the bridge at Ranville. The 5th Brigade was part of the English 6th Airborne Division which, with 4,800 men, was tasked with seizing the roads and communications between Orne and Dives and preventing any German movement towards the English bridgehead between Caen and Quisterham .

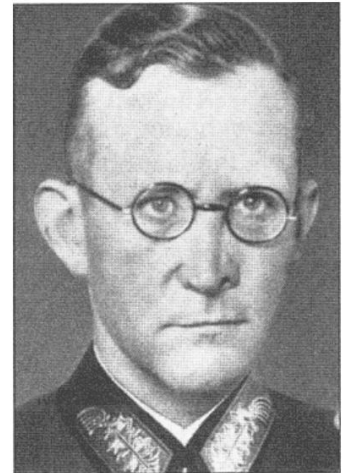
The British air jump in the area of the German 21st Panzer Division was in danger of being destroyed by it. The 21st Panzer Division with 16,000 men received orders from Field Marshal ROMMEL in May 1944 to deploy immediately after the enemy had landed in the air, namely the entire division . Attack only after clearance from Army Group B.”

However, ROMMEL's instructions were only known to the division commander, General Edgar FEUCHTINGER , and he was reached when things got serious around 2:00 to 3:00 a.m., as he was visiting a nightclub in Paris. At 1:20 a.m. General Wilhelm RICHTER gave the 21st Panzer Division the order by telephone to attack and destroy the airborne enemy forces with the units of the Panzer Division closest to them. At 2:00 a.m., RICHTER added his order, according to which the

whole 21st Panzer Division to attack the airborne enemy east of the Orne.

In the division, however, one felt bound by another order: No action without the permission of Army Group B, which commanded the 21st Panzer Division. At 2:00 a.m. General SPEIDEL called the division. The commander of

Panzer Grenadier Regiment 125, Colonel VON LUCHT, reported that when SPEIDEL called at 2:00 a.m., he did not give the order to immediately attack the airborne enemy with all available units. The division would not have received any permission to attack that night. General FEUCHTINGER, who had meanwhile returned from Paris, also had lively talks with the 7th Army, although he was once again strictly refused permission to deploy. So the night and the first hours of June 6, 1944 passed without the division being allowed to go into action. Finally General MARCKS of 84.



General of the artillery

Erich MARCKS (born 1891), he fell on June 12, 1944 at Hébécrevon in the department of Manche.

Corps - most likely without the permission of General SPEIDEL - ordered the 21st Panzer Division to attack immediately with the whole division east of the Orne and to smash any units of the 6th Airborne Division that had landed there and to cut off their connection to the west. However, the cannons of LUCK's tanks had not yet fired a shot at the British paratroopers east of the Orne when the 7th Army ordered them to turn back. One was quite capable of giving "reverse orders"! The order now read: "The 21st Panzer Division attacked with force the enemy landed west of the Orne, only with parts of the battle group von LUCK the bridgehead east of the Orne." This in turn cost valuable time, and so it happened that only small parts of the 21st Armored Division could act against the English airborne troops. It was perfectly clear to everyone involved that if the 21st Panzer Division had intervened in time, the British airborne landings could have been crushed within a short time.

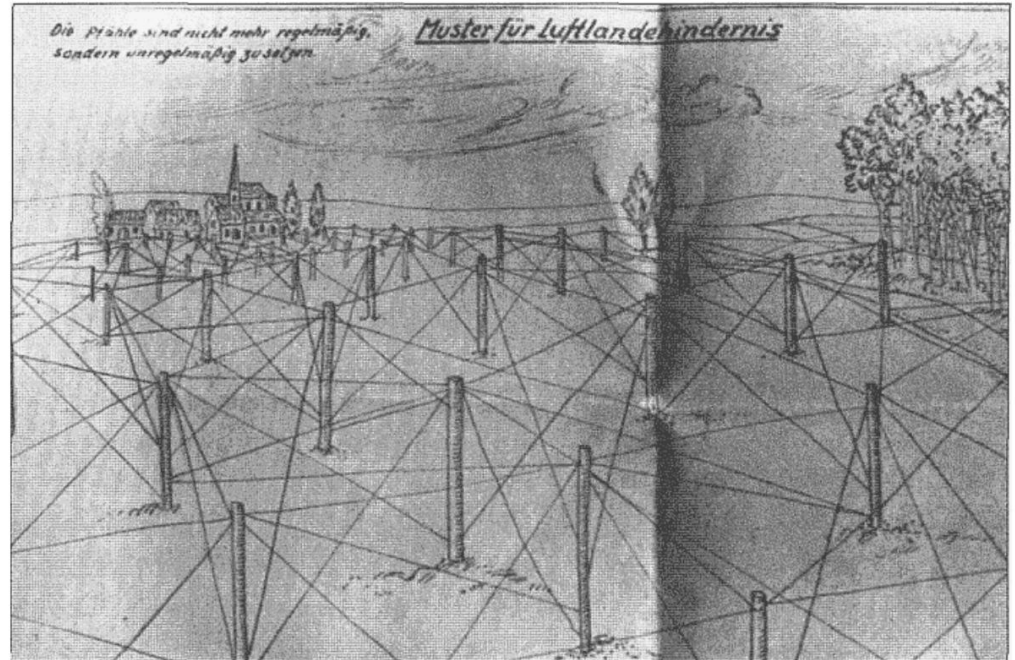
## **The missing mines of the ›Rommelspargel‹**

When Field Marshal Erwin ROMMEL was given the task at the end of 1943 to bring the German coastal defenses in the west into shape, he was aware that, based on the experience in Italy, the Allied airborne troops with their cargo gliders and paratroopers could pose a potentially deadly threat. In addition, the Germans, as pioneers, had deployed the paratroopers in the first

Phases of the war proved that airborne troops alone could conquer entire islands, even if their losses were terrible.

This is how ROMMEL invented the ›Rommelspargel‹. These were high pillars, crowded together in open fields, erected to carry loads

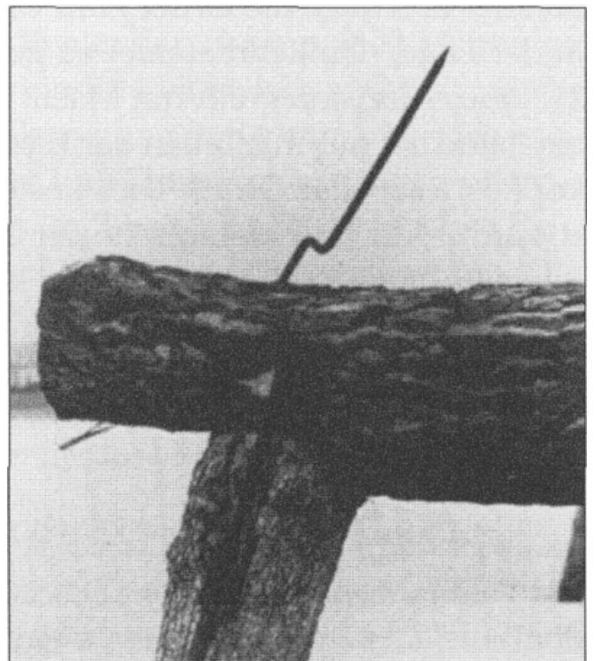
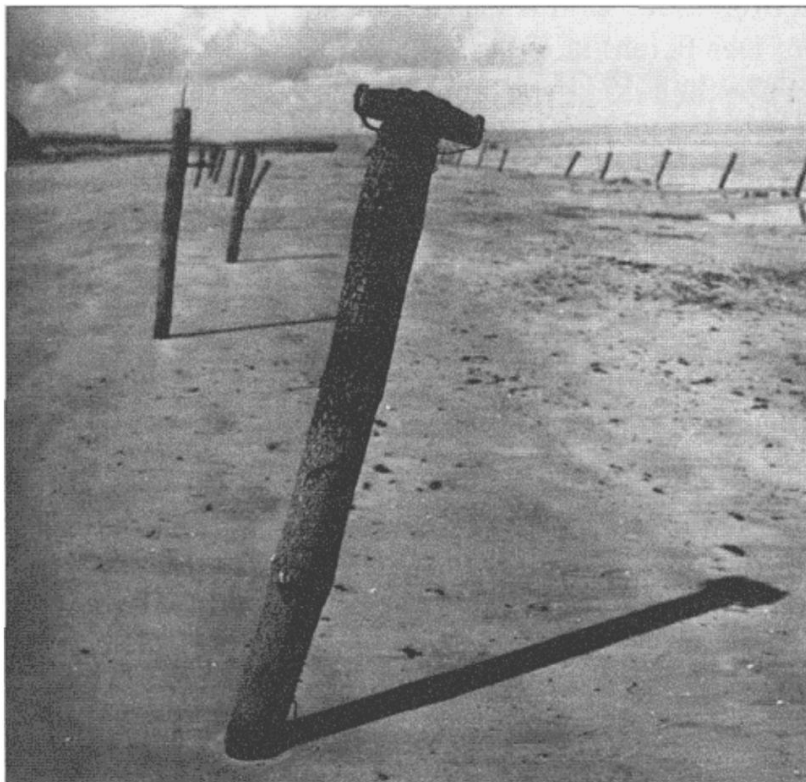
Hand drawing of  
ROM MEL for his  
airborne obstacle  
›Rommel spargel‹.



Bottom left: offshore  
obstacles with land  
mines installed, which  
were only installed after  
landing.

Right: battering rams  
with ›can openers‹.

Others were fitted with  
toothed steel rails  
against which Allied  
cargo gliders smashed.



to prevent sailors and parachute landings. They were supposed to carry mines on their tips. The millions of French anti-personnel mines in German depots, especially in the west, were intended for this purpose.

German soldiers and workers from the 'Organization Todt' succeeded in setting up 'Rommelspargel' in many threatened places in France in good time before landing. What they lacked were the mines to load them. In depots in France there were several million French mines captured in 1940 - they would only have had to be released to ROMMEL's troops. ROMMEL implored the OKW to finally deliver them, but there were also strange delays on the part of the German supply services. The mines, which could have been delivered months earlier, were not sent to ROMMEL until the first days of June. Not a single one could be built into the 'Rommelspargel' before the start of the landing.<sup>1</sup> Even without a deadly explosive charge, the 'Rommelspargel' proved to be a danger to the Allied cargo gliders, and many were smashed or damaged by them. Only very few of the Allied airborne troops who were annoyed by ROMMEL's annoying wooden posts on June 5th and 6th, 1944 may have known that they narrowly escaped an even more deadly danger.

1 Samuel W. MITCHAM Jr.,  
*The Desert Fox in*  
*Normandy* (Cooper  
Square 2001), pp. 20 & 6

ROMMEL with his  
pioneer leader, General  
Wilhelm MEISE.  
FROM: David IRVING,  
*Rommel, Weltbild,*  
Augsburg 19

In the end, however, the US 101st Airborne Division had lost 30 percent of its troops and 70 percent of its materiel when it landed that night.

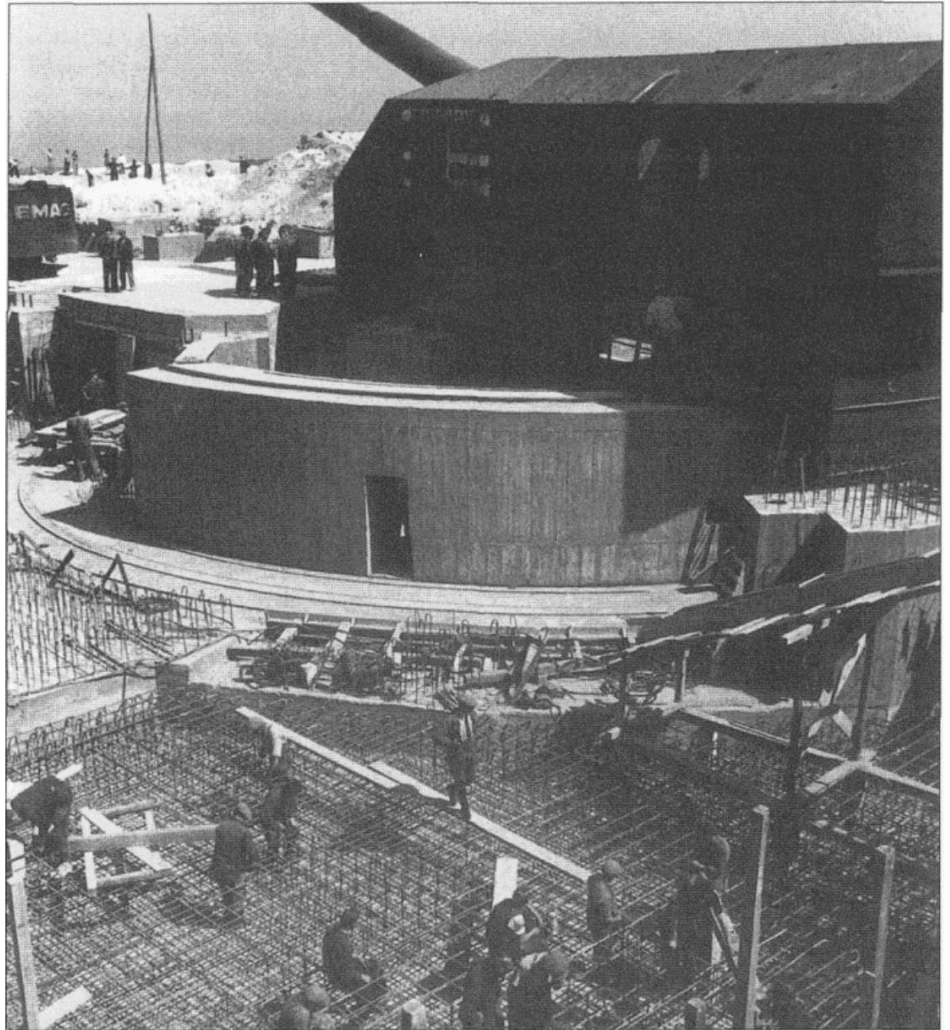
## **Has the Atlantic Wall Failed?**

»Built in three years, breached in three hours!« This motto still haunts people today when it comes to the role of the Atlantic Wall during the Normandy invasion in July 1944.

Today, any knowledgeable tourist to France can attest that the great bunkers of the Atlantic Wall stood precisely where no landings took place, while landings actually took place



One of the countless construction measures on the Atlantic Wall, which did not consist of one continuous fortification. 15,000 buildings were planned, in April 1943 6250 were finished. In March 1943, 644,800 m<sup>3</sup> were poured, and in April even 764,100 m<sup>3</sup>.



only smaller plants can be found in this area. In fact, the Atlantic Wall in the invasion area was only about 20 percent complete when it came to the big test, and the German coastal fortifications were actually unable to repel the Allied landing at any point.

So were they a failure? It is overlooked that, in the German view, it was only the task of the Atlantic Wall to pin the Allies to the coast until a counterattack by mobile armored units of the Wehrmacht and SS took place.

It was clear from the outset that the wall alone could not prevent the landing. All that mattered was the gain in time that the fortified positions, bunkers, and shore batteries were to achieve.

Between the German Field Marshals VON RUNDSTEDT and ROMMEL was debating whether the Panzer forces should repel the Allied landing forces right on the beach, as ROMMEL wanted, or whether the German main forces should be at a safe distance from the Allied ones. Naval artillery should be placed further inland to



destroy advancing invading forces in pitched battle.

This would have meant a distance of around 30 to 40 kilometers from the shoreline. To this day, there is a bitter debate about who was right. During World War II, however, the Germans decided on a compromise that allowed three Panzer Divisions to come close to the possible landing beaches: the 21st Panzer Division, the 12th SS Panzer Division "Hitler-Jugend" and the Panzer Lehr Division.

It is undisputed, 60 years after the end of the war, that the Normandy invasion on the evening of the first day did not go according to plan anywhere, despite all the material superiority. It is still difficult for American officials to announce the true extent of the bloody disasters at the airborne operation at Sainte-Mère-Eglise and at the Omaha beach. The official figure of 6,603 casualties is unrealistically low. The actual number of casualties in the near miss of June 6, 1944 is a closely guarded secret in American Army archives.<sup>1</sup>

1 Hein SEVERLOH, *WN62*, HEK Creativ Verlag, Garbsen 42006, p. 1 63 f.

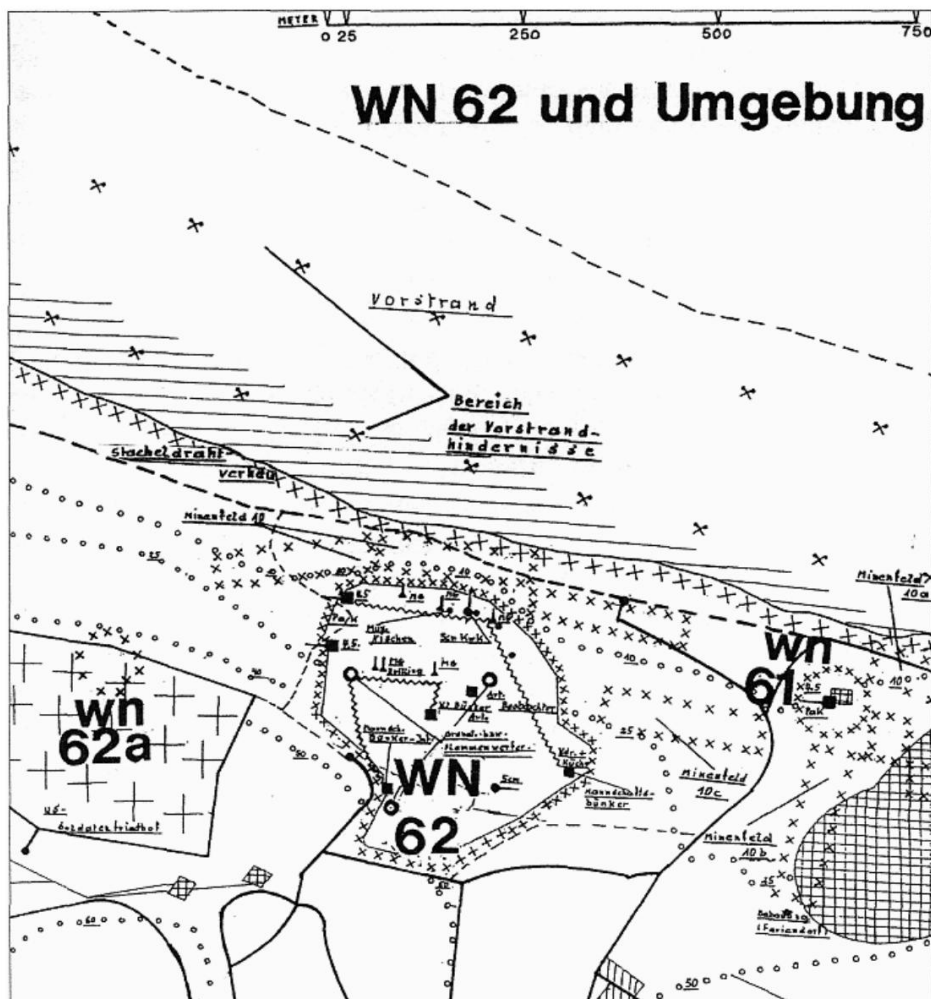
While the Americans were able to secure their section of the "Utah" beach by the end of the day with great effort, it was



Above: Hein SEVERLOH from the 1st battery of the 352.

artillery regiments.  
Left: The map created by Hermann PIPER showing the resistance nest 62 and the surrounding area. The armament consisted of two 7.5 cm anti-tank guns, grenade launchers, several machine guns, including a twin machine gun. From: David

IRVING *Battle of Europe*, DSZ, Munich 2004.



Corpses of American soldiers on the first day of landing. The exact number of victims is still a closely guarded secret.



the Omaha sector was still fiercely fought, and the survivors of the 352nd Infantry Division, despite extreme lack of ammunition, still put up a terrible resistance. Thousands of dead GIs lay on the beach alone in front of the shattered remains of the German base WN62. Most of them were victims of machine gunner Hein SEVERLOH. By chance he had a test MG 42 with a Böhler barrel, which could fire more than 20,000 shots without changing the barrel. It is inconceivable what would have happened to the landing if the Böhler company had delivered a dozen such "Hellfire" devices to the "Atlantic Wall".

The 714th Tank Battalion had lost all tanks to Omaha, while the 743rd Battalion had shot down 27 of 44 Shermans that had landed.

Although the English were initially able to secure their Gold and Sword sections of beach fairly quickly, they were only able to do so in the Juno section around 12 noon. Stronger than expected German resistance also prevented expansion of the beachheads everywhere in the English landing sector. A sign of the severity of the fighting on the British/Canadian landing sections was that 22 out of 100 AVRE tanks "Churchill" and 12 out of 50 "Sherman" threshing-wing tanks were destroyed on the day of the landing. Many other British tanks were taken out of action but later recovered.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Steven J. ZALOCA, *D-Day Fortifications in Normandy*, Ospray 2005, p. 58.

Hundreds of burned-out and shelled-out landing craft lay on all the landing beaches, which, according to English officers, looked like a shipyard in northern Scotland.

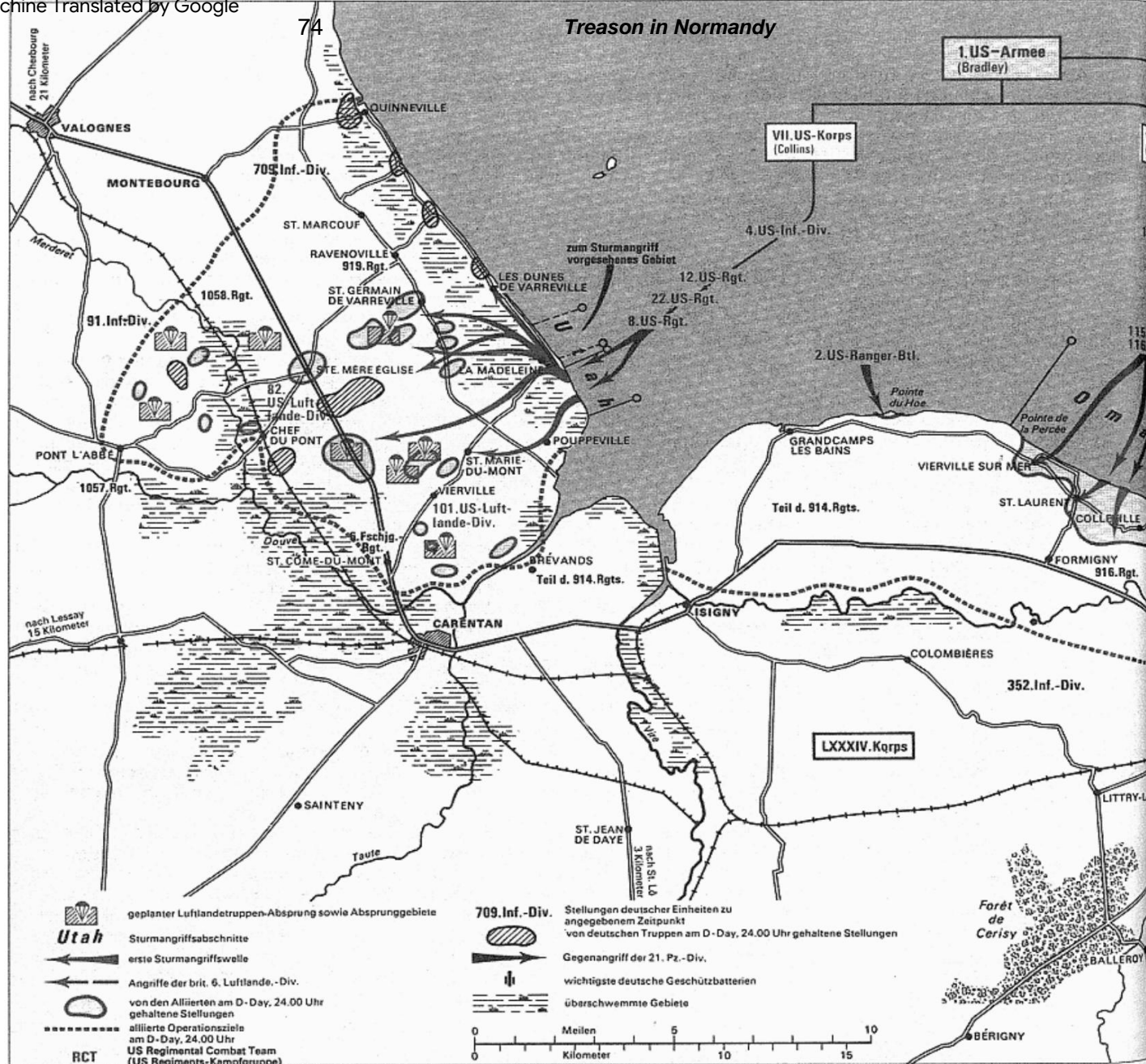
Even with the British, individual operations on D-Day are still mysteriously clouded, so that their own difficulties (and losses) were probably greater than one is willing to admit.

The Allied forces that had seeped through the Atlantic Wall were not a force to be taken seriously in the first hours and days. A German counter-attack, which was bound to go according to plan, would simply sweep them away. Three armored divisions were ready for this, and in today's war history there is little dispute that if there had been a German armored commander in the front-line area of Caen who would have commanded the armored forces of all three divisions with clear and unrestricted authority on June 6th, no doubt there would have been a real chance of crushing both the American and English beachheads.

The Allies suffered heavy casualties on the landing sections. A comprehensive German tank advance, which could have exploited this phase of weakness to decide the war, did not materialize.



A classic tenet of the art of war is that when the attacker has won the far river bank, he is in a state of weakness. In an amphibious landing operation, the beach represented that river course of the old land wars. That weakness mo



Situation on June 6, 1944 at midnight.

Despite paralyzing measures on the German side, the Allies did not achieve their goals for the day, but nevertheless set up bridgeheads in the individual landing areas – with the exception of Omaha.

ment of the Allied landing troops was the ideal time for the German counterattack. The German conspirators also knew this and acted accordingly.

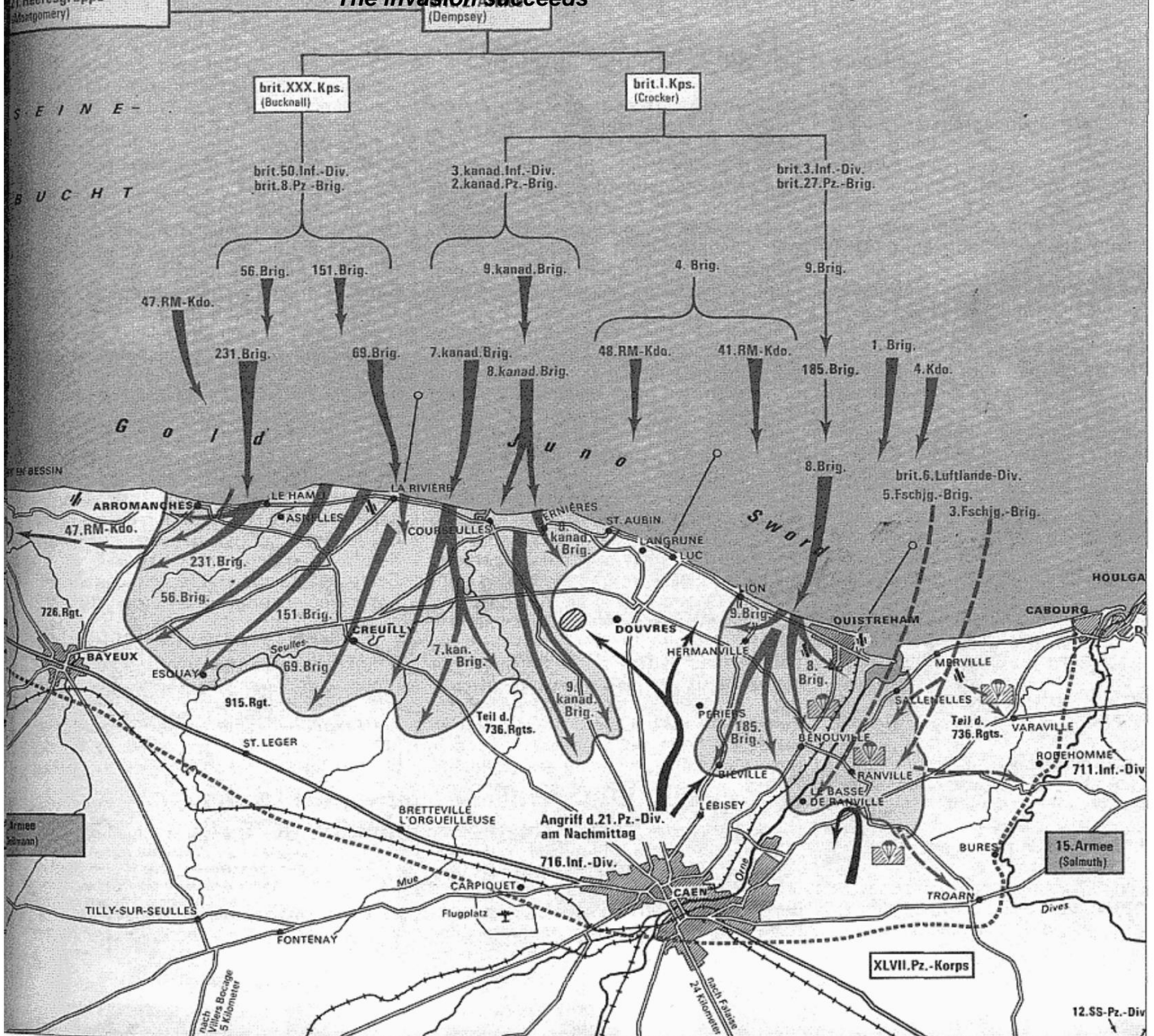
Only in one case was a German tank advance to the Beach, which was canceled after a few hours.

The surviving German defenders on the Atlantic Wall continued to wait desperately for the promised tanks, which never came.

Their resistance sometimes lasted for days.

For example, at Douvres Air Force Base, codenamed Goldfinch, 1.5 miles from the coast, 238 Air Force soldiers, 3 anti-tank guns, 3x5s, along with Army soldiers who had fled to them, were stationed





cm combat vehicle cannons, a dozen flamethrowers and 20 machine guns under its commander, Oberleutnant Kurt EGLE, withstood all Allied attacks. For ten long days they defended their base and reported to the German command details of the Allied beachhead Juno, which surrounded them on all sides. Their hopes were sorely disappointed, and on June 16, 1944, they had to give up their resistance, which was supposed to last only a few hours until the German tanks arrived, and surrender to the Allies.

This only happened because the English introduced gas (!) into the ventilation shafts of the bunker. The information required for this came from the French who were involved in the construction of the bunker.

**Blind artillery**

The German coastal artillery in Normandy had numerous bunkered fire control and B positions with a view of the beach.

They contained excellent optical range finders and trackers to enable the batteries to track moving targets such as warships. In particular, the devices used in naval batteries were known for their accuracy.

Only a few days before D-Day, all telemetry devices from all fire control and B stations had to be taken to Paris (!) for an inspection on "orders from above". This was followed!1 Other B sites that had just been completed waited in vain for these devices, such as the 21 cm battery at St. Marcouf. The promised

1 Theo MUNZ, information to the author of June 16, 2003.

protective screens for the gaps in the bunker never arrived either. But they had been sent from the Reich territory long before that.

2 Volker GREMLER, »Bollwerk am Meer« in: DWJ 06/2006.

When things started on the coast, the fire control and B positions were only able to take imprecise auxiliary measurements and were exposed to the fire of the Allied ship's artillery without protective blinds.2

**Who took away the ammunition from the coastal artillery just before landing? (artificial ammunition shortage!)**

Around noon on June 6, 1944, US General Omar BRAD LEY wanted to give up the Omaha landing beach. In fact, the American invading army faced a seemingly certain defeat there for many hours. Thousands of dead soldiers lay on the beach, their amphibious tanks either sunk in the rough sea or shot down by German anti-tank guns. Aerial photographs of 'Omaha' at around 12:00 p.m. as the tide was rising show the horrifying sight of the blood-stained sea (red blood mud) and a seam several hundred meters long of washed-out masses of dead or wounded bodies.3 The 'Operation Bloodbath ' the Englishman threatened to become a terrible reality.

3 Hein SEVERLOH, *WN62*, HEK Creativ Verlag, Garbsen 4 2006, p. 168.

Countless shot-up landing craft lay burning and smoking in the shallow water.

4 Information from Volker CREMLER of May 17, 2006.

Still unpublished photos by a famous US war photographer prove that American officers shot their own soldiers who didn't want to go onto the beach.4 It seemed that the German 352nd Infantry Division was able to hold the field. Already at 8:30